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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT

Dr.K.N.Katju

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FOREWORD

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Main points covered in the interview

Family background and education; as a lawyer at Kanpur; Pandit Pirthi Nath; Motilal Nehru; Annie Besant; National movement and language issue; Banaras Congress session; in politics (1914); Jallianwala Bagh; I.N.A. trial (1944-45); Jawaharlal Nehru on defence, industrialization, foreign affairs and untouchability; Sardar Patel and integration of states; Patel and constitution making (the states Committee); the Nehrus; Kashmiris and their migration; Shambunath and leading families; Tej Bahadur Sapru; Sir Sunderlal and Banaras Hindu University; Congress ministry in U.P. (1937) and rural development.

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BIO-DATA

Katju, Dr. K.N.; b. 17 June 1887; educ. Jaura (M.P.), Lahore and Allahabad; lawyer at the Kanpur Bar (1908-14); editor, Allahabad Law Journal (1918-46); Chairman, Allahabad Municipal Board (1935-37); Minister, U.P. Government (1937-39 and 1946-47); Member, Constituent Assembly (1946-47); Governor, Orissa (1947-48); West Bengal (1948-51); Law Minister in the Union Cabinet (1951-52); died, 1968.

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH

Dr. K.N. KATJU

Recorded on 17.8.1966.
at Allahabad

Early Life

Dr. Katju: When my ancestors came from Kashmir I do not know, but my great-grandfather, Mansa Ram Katju, was probably born in India. In 1818 there was a war between the East India Company and the ruler of the Indore State, then called the Holkar State of Maharaja Holkar, and in that war Ghafoor Khan, one of the commanders of Holkar, turned a traitor and kept away from the battle-field. He was in possession of a jagir given to him by Maharaja Holkar. The Jagir was called the Jaora Jagir and in the Treaty of Mehdpur by which peace was arranged between Holkar and the East India Company, Ghafoor Khan was given this Jaora State as Jagir under the 9th article of the Treaty of Mehdpur. Mansa Ram Katju, my great-grandfather was employed in this Jaora State in 1820. Since that day my ancestors on the paternal line, great-grandfather, grand-father, father, were all employed there. On my mother's side I am a Punjabi. My Nanajee, (maternal grandfather) Nand Lal Kaul was a resident of the Punjab. He probably began life in the Hissar District (present Haryana). My mother was born at Sirsa in the Hissar district. My maternal grandfather then went over to Hoshiarpur in the Punjab and spent many years there. He retired in 1893-94 and came over to Lahore. I was myself married in Rajasthan in Jodhpur State and I came over for earning my livelihood and building my career to U.P. So I call myself a Bharat-Nivasi and to this claim is further added the fact that I functioned as Governor for a long time both in Orissa and Bengal, and I have purchased a house in Jagannath Puri where I have been going from 1924.

I was educated upto the middle standard in the Jaora High School, and then I went over to Lahore for my further education and passed my matriculation examination in 1901 from Rang Mahal Mission High School, and then joined the very well-known college in Lahore, known as Forman Christian College, and I passed my Intermediate examination in 1903 and took my B.A. degree in 1905. My father then

wrote to Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru who had taken his degree of Doctor of Laws in 1904, just as a member of Kashmiri brotherhood, one writing to another. There was no relationship of any kind between the Katjus and the Saprus, nor were they known to or had ever met each other. My father wrote that he was anxious to give his son, Kailas Nath, a legal education, but he himself was not acquainted with the English language and he did not know how and where to do so, and he asked for Dr. Sapru's advice. Dr. Sapru wrote back that in his opinion legal education can best be imparted only at a place where a High Court was located. At that time there were only four High Courts in India, at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Allahabad. Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were out of the question. So Dr. Sapru said, "Kailas Nath might come over here to Allahabad and have his legal education". So in compliance with that advice, I came over from Lahore to Allahabad for my legal education. In Lahore there was a Chief Court but then it was not a High Court. I came over to Allahabad in July 1905. I think that Jawaharlal Nehru had not till then left for England and I used to see him riding about in the Alfred Park. Dr. Sapru was then living in a rented house on Elgin Road. I lived with him for two or three weeks and then, a little later, shifted over to the hostel then being built by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and now a days known as Malaviyaji Hostel, a very big one. It was then in the process of construction and I was one of the first batch of students to live in that hostel. I remained there for two years till I passed my LL.B. examination and then went back to Jaora.

Becomes a Lawyer

I was most anxious to follow my ancestors and enter the State service, but I did not succeed and then as a last resort I came over to Kanpur in February 1908 for my law practice. Kanpur was formerly the home of Pandit Motilal. Pandit Motilal was said to have started his legal practice there. The leader of the Bar in Kanpur at that time and the most prominent public leader in public life, was Pandit ~~Pirthinath~~ Prithwinath. He was not highly educated. Probably he was only a matriculate, but he had built up an enormous practice, was celebrated and well-known as a wonderful cross-examiner all over the province and I think he had a practice

of much over Rupees five thousand a month even in those days.

Contacts with Motilal Nehru

Pandit Motilal started his practice in Kanpur, remained there for two or three years and then shifted over to Allahabad and soon became eminent. When I was a student in Allahabad from 1905 to 1907, Pandit Motilal was living in Anand Bhawan, but he used to live then a very anglicised life. He was given to Western modes of living and Western modes of thought, and it was not possible for a young man like me even to think of entering Anand Bhawan. As a student I do not remember ever meeting him. But when I started my practice in 1908 I went with Pandit Prithwinath in November 1908 on a professional engagement in a case pending in Mirzapur. It was a very heavy case and Pandit Prithwinath halted at Allahabad just to consult Pandit Motilal. We stayed in Anand Bhawan. We arrived there at 9.30 at night and on enquiry Pandit Prithwinath was told that Pandit Motilal was dining out. So we all soon went to bed. I would not eat food cooked in Anand Bhawan because in those days I was very orthodox in my community life, and we regarded Pandit Motilal as a very unorthodox person. Next morning we were sitting in the verandah, Pandit Prithwinath and I, and I noticed Pandit Motilal coming out of his bedroom in a big dressing gown. He looked at me and then he said to Pandit Prithwinath, "I do not recognise this young man." Pandit Prithwinath introduced me. That was my first meeting with Pandit Motilal, the one I shall ever remember.

It was a memorable scene for me because from that day he extended his affection to me. And then in a year or two, 1909-1910, there was another scene at Kanpur in the Civil Judge's Court. There was a big case in Kanpur and Pandit Motilal came as a leading lawyer for the plaintiff and he put forward a compromise. I was a junior then of one or two years' standing. I was engaged by a petty individual. No other lawyer spoke. I stood up and said, "My client is not a party to this compromise. The case should be tried and heard against him". Pandit Motilal tried to laugh me out but I stood to my guns and said in a loud voice, "Sir, this compromise is a big fraud on this court". Pandit Motilal was impressed and

subsequently said to a friend, "This young man is a very wild cock".

When I shifted over to Allahabad in 1914, I came in direct contact with him. In the beginning, of course, it was a little distant, and even at that time I did not ~~use to~~ go to Anand Bhawan because my social circle was different from his. Jawaharlalji and Motilalji were both living a grand life in Western style. In the High Court we used to meet often. Generally it is ~~xxx~~ said that the father guides and builds the future of his sons, but in a way in the Nehru family the position was reversed. Jawaharlal, the son, by his well-known political activities, guided the activities of his father because Motilalji was a very devoted father. He loved his son to the utomost extent, and then when he noticed that Jawaharlal was coming under the influence, deeper and deeper, of Mrs. Annie Besant and taking part in the Home Rule ~~M~~ movement, he was himself drawn into it. Motilalji was a towering personality and whenever he took up a cause, he dominated it. Therefore when he entered the Home Rule movement, he became a tower of strength. There was no question of his being a mere member, he soon became the guide, philosopher and the leader of this movement. So he gave up his law practice, he was interned. I used to meet him very often from 1918 onwards. Jawaharlal used to be away a lot from Allahabad, but Motilalji was almost always there in Anand Bhawan and I used to see him often. He was so kind to me. When he retired from the profession, he directed that all his pending cases should be handed over to me, and thus I got a large number of cases from him. Motilalji was a wonderful person, a powerful, guiding, dominating personality and he commanded great influence in public life. Of course we had, what I may call, an agitational period for one or two years when Gandhiji started his Satyagraha Movement but after 1925 there was some rest and Motilalji used occasionally to appear in some big cases in the Allahabad High Court. His death early in 1931 was a terrible event for many of us. It broke my heart then. He was only seventy years old.

The Home Rule Movement:- Jawaharlal and Mrs. Besant.

Jawaharlalji used to live in Anand Bhawan for several years. So far as his practice in the bar was concerned, I have described it

it at length in an article I wrote about it and it has been published under the caption, "Jawaharlal at the Bar". In those early six years naturally he did not have a very leading position at the bar. He worked under his father in big cases. He had just begun fighting some cases of his own but I used to notice that his heart was not in the legal profession. He liked bigger issues and at that time in 1916 the political atmosphere in India was almost controlled by Mrs. Besant. She had started the Indian Home Rule Movement and Mrs. Besant wielded enormous influence in those days in India because practically all our important speech-making was limited to the English language. Only Gandhiji, when he returned from South Africa and when he began to take part in politics and began to go into the villages, then only regional languages, Hindi and others, began to come into prominence as one had to speak in the regional language in a village. But so far as urban areas were concerned, the spoken language on the platform frequently was English. The first Congress that I attended not as a delegate, but as a visitor, was in 1905 when I was a student. It was held in Banaras under the Presidentship of Mr. Gokhale. The number of delegates was about 1200. It was memorable in this way that I think it was the first Congress in which some speeches were delivered in the local Hindi language, but that aroused great comment because most of the delegates had come from Bengal and Madras and were not acquainted with the Hindi language. It was also memorable for another reason because it was in that Congress that Malaviyaji announced for the first time on a public stage his intention to establish a Hindu University in Banaras. So English was the controlling language in our public life, and Mrs. Besant was one of the foremost orators of the day. She used to deliver lectures in early days on religious subjects. When I was in Lahore, in 1901-05, I became a member of the Theosophical Society because she used to come there and deliver lectures on Theosophy. I began to take interest in politics from 1914 thro'the Home Rule movement, and Jawaharlal was also drawn into it.

Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy

I think if one was to ask me, "How were the foundations laid of our great national structure which we call our free India?", I would say that the foundation stone was laid by the four hundred

martyrs who were killed in Jallianwala Bagh. That was the event which horrified India and which in a way set people, even Gandhiji thinking. Gandhiji was in a way supporting British Rule and the dominant policy of the Congress was advocacy for Dominion Status. We wanted to remain a member of the British Commonwealth. We wanted to seek and keep up our connections with the British people, but Jallianwala Bagh changed the situation altogether, and it started the four boycotts of Gandhiji's movement, and then it went on. There was the Salt Satyagraha in 1930.

I.N.A. Trial

Then I think the end came in my opinion with the I.N.A. trials in 1944-45. I was closely connected with them. It is a great long story. The British people worked for their own downfall. It was open to them to hold the trial somewhere in Manipur and hang the accused, if they wanted to, but I don't know what led them to bring those people over to the Red Fort in Delhi. Probably they thought that when it came to be known all over India that these three people and their associates had actually killed their own comrades in the Indian Army, Indian people would be horrified and there would be a storm of indignation. But exactly the contrary happened. Bhulabhai Desai was the leading Counsel for the Defence and I was his junior. There were many others too, but they seldom appeared in Court. It was really a sight because Jawaharlal put on his professional gown and himself once or twice attended as a member of the bar for the accused. So did Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru. So did Asaf Ali. They just sat there for two or three days. But for three months Bhulabhai Desai and I laboured and conducted the defence. There was hulla-baloo and tremendous public excitement all over India. In U.P. and Delhi it was simply awful. The three accused were ordered to be hanged by the Court Martial at 11 O'clock in the morning, but by 7 O'clock in the evening, not only was their death sentence commuted but they were also released from the custody. And I think the British people came to realise that they could not any longer continue their rule and administration in India, and they gracefully brought it to an end.

Pandit Nehru - reasons for his popularity.

Throughout these 25 years, Jawaharlal dominated the political scene. I have always remarked and thought to myself that there are two dominant characteristics in our national culture. What attracts people most, is the purity and nobility of one's personal and private character, and the spirit of renunciation. Nobody asks how much money you have accumulated; the question always is, how much have you given away? That is ~~why~~ because of this spirit of renunciation, that every Sadhu, every Sanyasi in our towns and villages is an object of veneration. Jawaharlal became the idol of the nation because people thought he was born in Anand Bhawan and though not the son of a ruler, he was brought up as a Rajkumar; he was highly educated. And now just look at him! He has given away everything and sacrificed all his promising career and spent twelve years in jail. I remember very well that when there was this question of boycott of foreign cloth, literally four cart-loads of dresses made of foreign cloth, worn by Motilalji and other members of the Nehru family were brought and burnt in the Purushottamdas Park. So Jawaharlal became the idol of the nation. He had his home in Anand Bhawan to begin with, but I think that ultimately he found his way into every single village in India, and not only in every village but also in every village home in India, and he was treated by every villager throughout the length and breadth of India, as an inmate, as a member of the family. So deep was the love and affection of the common man for him because of his nobility of character and his spirit of renunciation and devotion to work. Before he went to the larger sphere, he worked for ten or twelve years in U.P. alone and he used to go into the villages, ride in bullock-carts and spend his nights with cultivators, in their homes and that made him realise the depth of our poverty, the vastness of our problems. He ceased to be a drawing-room man. By his going to the villages, he came to know how the people lived, what they suffered and what the national requirements were. I think he and Gandhiji did two wonderful things, namely they awakened in the Indian masses the desire for independence, and in spite of their illiteracy and ~~spite of~~ their poverty, the masses rose and said to the British, "Go".

Jawaharlal as Prime Minister

National struggles in other countries had gone on for fifty years and more. In India the remarkable thing happened that we won our freedom in twenty-five years and the result was that the leaders who won freedom then, were also given the opportunity and on them was laid the responsibility of administering the country. Jawaharlal became our first Prime Minister and all our great leaders who were his co-workers, they became the Chief Ministers of their States. One was my beloved friend, my class-fellow, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. He became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Another was Dr.B.C. Roy of Bengal. From 1946 Jawaharlal became the Prime Minister of India and till his death he continued to hold that high office. He was the beloved of the people and commanded public life. He was most anxious to industrialise India because he was deeply impressed by the need for industrialisation. I was myself a member of the Government of India and served with him for five years, three years in the Ministry of Home Affairs and two years in the Defence Department and I knew his anxiety for the betterment of India. When I was in the Government of India I was rather fortunate because those were very peaceful years.

Defence vs: Development.

The only difficulty was with Pakistan. With China we were on the best of terms. China was our great friend. When Chouenlai came in 1955 on his tour, he was received as an intimate friend. So there was no trouble. There was perfect peace and tranquility in India from 1946 to 1956. Indeed, there was a demand everywhere by the Congress party and all the Opposition parties in the Legislature for reduction of our military expenditure. There was no question of raising the strength of the army. They said, "You are spending three hundred or four hundred crores on the Defence Department. Reduce it." There was quiet everywhere. Jawaharlalji was at that time devoted to building our industries and he was the originator of the Plans. The First Five Year Plan was followed by two others, and in those days attention was rivetted on industrialisation, on building up our steel plants, and on electrification, because we wanted to electrify India; we wanted power, we wanted to cease

importing steel; and there was not much consideration given to agricultural production. We are talking about agriculture so intensely these days, but we do not realise how much the situation has changed. I remember very well that in my speech which I delivered on the 26th of January, 1950, the great day of the commencement of our great Republic, I said our population is only 320 millions. Now within sixteen years population has risen from 320 million to 470 million. These agricultural requirements to some extent are due to the terrible increase in population; to that extent our land under cultivation has not grown and there are many other reasons.

Jawaharlalji was very successful. Of course, after 1957 he had to face the difficulty with China, the difficulty with Pakistan and the difficulties in the international situation. In those days when I was in the Government, he used to concentrate mostly on his activities in the foreign sphere. There was the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet and his attention was directed to our problems in the international sphere ~~was~~ and towards industrialisation. But there were not many problems at home. His personal influence also in a way was a great solution of our untouchability problem. In urban areas untouchability has almost disappeared but in rural areas it remains and that requires another solution. It is now upto us to follow Jawaharlalji's example and we should consider him as a representative Indian, as the very embodiment of our ancient culture.

Sardar Patel and Indian States

I regard Sardar Patel as the builder of Modern India. Our India had been divided into hundreds of small principalities during ages past. Once or twice in hundreds of years, there used to be a big emperor like Asoka or Harshavardhan, who it was said would rule the whole country. Otherwise there were numerous rulers. When the British came, they held political dominion over the whole of India, but the portion of India under their direct administration was only about six-tenth and four-tenth or even more, formed the area of numerous Indian principalities governed by Indian Princes. When the British handed over administration to us in 1947, British India, as

it was, came under the administration of the National Government. The British rulers left the Indian Princes to their own resources. Had those Indian rulers continued, then the country would have remained divided. Each State of these hundreds of rulers constituted in itself a separate piece of territory. There the ruler had the right to make his own laws, to administer those laws in his executive capacity. There he had his own judicial administration. The Indian writ did not prevail in the Princely territories. So it was left to Sardar Patel's genius and imagination to work out a solution. I was then the Governor of Orissa and I had the good fortune of seeing Sardar Patel begin these operations at Cuttack. He convened a meeting of the rulers of what were called the Eastern States and he put before them the entire problem and he said that the people of the States were demanding freedom for themselves and if the rulers continued to rule, they would have to face great difficulty in carrying on their administration. Thus there would be disorder within their territories and the Indian Administration and the Indian Government will not be able to help. So he said the best course would be for the Indian Princes to retire from the scene, to abdicate and to hand over their territories to the Indian Government They would certainly lose their reuenues. But the Indian Government would pay them suitable sums called Privy Purses and they would be entitled to take away their personal properties. This solution was, after two days' discussions, accepted in Cuttack. There the foundation was laid for the modern united India. Then Sardar Patel proceeded from Cuttack to Nagpur and from Nagpur, he went to Gwalior and within the course of a few months, all the Indian Princes except the Nizam of Hyderabad, had accepted and then agreed to surrender, abdicate and retire from the scene. The Nizam was a little more obstinate, not because of his own inclination, but because of the pressures put upon him. So what was called a Police action, was taken against Hyderabad and the Nizam also agreed within a few days. And the present sight of this marvellous, free, united India is really a gift of Sardar Patel to the Indian nation. It has added to the strength of the country, to its influence and to the prosperity of the nation at large.

Sardar Patel and the Indian Constitution

Another incident in which I was ~~making of the~~ closely concerned with Sardar Patel was the question of constitution - making. Before the establishment of the Republic, we had a Constituent Assembly whose task was to frame the Constitution. The Constituent Assembly appointed two committees, one to draw up the Constitution for the Central Government. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Chairman of that Committee, Another committee was appointed to draw up the constitution for the State Governments and its Chairman was Sardar Patel. I was also nominated a member of the States committee. I had just at that time gone on some official business to the United States of America as the head of an official delegation and I had to stay there for over three months and had opportunity for a close study of the American Constitution. There I saw that the State Governors were elected. I may add here that the U.S.A. consists of nearly 50 States and each of the States, big or small, each one has a Governor and that Governor is elected by the people for a term of four years. There is of course an elected legislature, but the Governor is responsible for the carrying on of the executive administration. The legislature does not interfere by'votes of no confidence' with the day-to-day executive administration. The budget is presented before the legislature and also it has to deal with questions of legislation. It may indicate its will by refusing to pass the budget. That is a different matter. Otherwise the Governor continues for his term, four years. If he behaves badly and if he is guilty of some improper activities, then it is open under the Constitution to impeach him, and he may have to face an impeachment. That is a different matter, but there is no question of turning him out by a vote of no confidence on any matter. I was very much struck by this aspect of the American Constitution and I thought that it would be more suitable to our Indian conditions rather than make the executive government responsible to the legislature and lay it open to interference by members of the legislature through questions and votes of no confidence and all sofis of other pressures. So when this matter came to be discussed in the Constitutent Assmbly committee, our first question was how to appoint the Governor. I proposed on the

American model that the Governor of a State should be elected by all the people of the State on adult franchise basis. There was enormous discussion on this point. There was a lot of opposition and Jawaharlal said it was a very important matter and it should be discussed before a joint meeting of committees. Both committees met jointly and ultimately it was carried. Both the committees resolved that the Governor should be an elected Governor. My next point was that the Secretaries of the Governors, call them Ministers, call them his Cabinet, should not be responsible to the legislature, but should be responsible personally to the Governor. To this Sardar Patel would not even listen. He said: "We have grown up all these hundred, hundred and fifty years under British institutions. We have become accustomed to the British parliamentary form of government and no one would like here to have an independent Governor of the type that you have mentioned and the executive government of that type". I could not proceed with the matter further because I was shortly afterwards appointed Governor of Orissa, and I had to go away to Cuttack and retire from the Constitutent Assembly. The Assembly discussed the matter, but probably my point of view was never placed before them and the committee resolved that the State Ministers should be responsible not to the Governor, but to the local legislature. When the matter was finally decided, then the Constitutent Assembly itself saw and the Government saw, that if you do not invest the Governor with any powers he becomes a mere constitutional head, then what is the good of electing him and putting him to all the trouble and expense of election? So they dropped the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly and it was decided that the State Governor should be appointed by the President of India, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

My own personal opinion, for whatever it may be worth, is that the American system works well and is better suited to our Indian conditions. There the people do not lose all control because the legislature with its powers to pass the budget and pass legislation, keeps the Governor in right trim. The Governor knows that if he misbehaves in any way, then the legislation recommended by him would be thrown out and his budget may also go. Therefore, indirectly the people through their legislature do control and keep

a check over his activities.

Sardar Patel was a man of genius, was a man of strong will, and a man of determination, and a man of action. He was Gandhiji's co-worker, his lieutenant, and he carried on the struggle with zeal and drive and it was our national misfortune that we lost him within three years. Gandhiji too did not remain. He was carried away within six months of our attaining independence and Sardar Patel went away after three years. And we have not had the benefit, nor the nation, of their advice and guidance in the performance of their duties and in the discharge of their responsibilities and in working the free administration of a free India.

Nehru family

Pandit Motilal Nehru had only three children, a son, Jawaharlal and two daughters, Vijayalakshmi Pandit and another who is in Bombay. Mrs. Motilal Nehru was an ideal wife. She managed her household affairs wonderfully. I came into contact with her, but not very closely. Somehow my mother developed a great intimacy with her. My mother was herself a very bright woman of exceptional intelligence and of very affectionate nature and she and Swarup Rani, Mrs. Motilal Nehru, began to love each other like sisters and Swarup Rani Nehru would come often to our house to see my mother. By development of events, the Nehru family underwent an enormous change in the conduct of their domestic affairs. In the beginning Anand Bhawan was, you may call it a citadel of Western - style civilisation with great pomp and splendour, but when Jawaharlalji and Motilalji fell into the orbit of the national agitation and Motilalji retired from practice, and Jawaharlal began to go to jail, of course, that ancient splendour was gone and the family began to live in a much simpler, though much more striking ways. The ladies attuned themselves to the changed circumstances. I know that Jawaharlal almost worshipped his mother, held her in great reverence. She passed away sometime in 1935, greatly admired and greatly respected by the entire community.

Jawaharlal was married in 1916. I happened to be an invitee to the marriage and I remember very well attending all the three

functions which Motilalji held to celebrate the great auspicious event in the Nehru family. He gave a big party. He invited all the advocates to a separate party, and he gave a great dinner to the members of the Kashmiri community. The new bride, Motilalji's daughter-in-law, was Kamala and she was a charming young lady. I know that when Jawaharlalji entered the political arena and began to take, year by year, a keener and keener part in politics, his wife took the warmest share with him. I do not know whether she went to jail herself, but outside Jawaharlalji knew that her heart was with him in all his political activities. She never kept aloof but she was of weak health. She fell ill. Jawaharlalji had to send her away to Europe and for, I think, a very long period, she had to remain in Switzerland and Jawaharlalji had to go there and she died in Switzerland. She passed away early. Had she been allowed by God to remain, I am certain she would have been of the greatest assistance and co-operation, the greatest comrade to Jawaharlalji in his great campaign for national freedom.

Migration of Kashmiris to India

The ancestors of the present generation of Kashmiri Pandits in India migrated from Kashmir into India about 200-250 years ago. I don't think they came into India as members of big groups. Probably they came individually. Very probably they left their homes in Kashmir and came over to India for a brighter career in life. Their first goal was Punjab. So they settled down in Lahore and in the neighbouring districts. When they found that Lahore had became practically full, then they began coming over to Delhi, and Delhi they made the central home of the Kashmiri immigrants into India. From Delhi they went two ways, east and west. Many families went east and the goal was Agra, Kanpur or Lucknow, Allahabad, and some other towns in modern Uttar Pradesh and some families went into Bihar and proceeded to Bengal and even Orissa. The most notable of them was Pandit Shambhu Nath who became a great lawyer and was the first Indian Judge of an Indian High Court. He was the first Indian to be appointed a judge of the Calcutta High Court. I may add here that in those early days it was not the practice for Kashmiri community to add their caste specifications to their own names. This was probably introduced by Motilalji and

some others and he began calling himself Motilal Nehru and his practice was followed by others, Sapru, Katju, Kunzru and so on and so forth. Otherwise in the previous years every Kashmiri was a Pandit, for instance, Pandit Ajudhyanath was one of the greatest lawyers, advocates of the Allahabad High Court but he never added Kunzru to his name. He practised for about thirty years and he was known all over India as Pandit Ajudhyanath. His sons are now great people and are known as Pandit Hridayath Kunzru, our great patriot, and Gopinath Kunzru. So Pandit Shambhunath would come first, but he had to follow the Bengali practice. Bengalis also have names like Brijmohan, Rabindranath, Anil Kumar and so on. But they add to it their titles to scholarship like Mukhopadhyaya and Chatopadhyaya and other ~~servant~~ surnames and these in turn have become Mukerjees, Chatterjees, Bannerjees etc. So Pandit Shambunath also reversed the place of 'Pandit' in his name and he became Shambunath Pandit. Some Kashmiri families went down to Orissa and there is a big family there known as the Raja of Darpan family. Many families went towards west and they became great figures and they played a great part in Rajasthan and Central India, Madhya Bharat. They became great figures in the States of Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Indore, Holkar and others. One of the greatest was Sir Sukhdev Prasad Kak. He became the Prime Minister of Jodhpur. He was knighted by the British and he was regarded as a great statesman. Similarly there was Colonel Kailash Nath Haksar in Gwalior. There were many people in Indore. That is the Kashmiri community. Many people came to Allahabad. Leading families were those of Pandit Ajudhianath then Pandit Tej Bahadur and Pandit Motilal. There were several others.

Kashmiris in those days used to settle down in cities and there they observed their own customs in matters of inter-dining and marriage, but one great point about Kashmiris was, that wherever they settled, they made it their home and their neighbours began to treat them as natives of that province. Now if you ask anybody in Allahabad, they would say that Jawaharlal was their man. He was born there. A Bengali wherever he may go, he never forgets Calcutta. He is always a Calcutta man. He says Calcutta is his home. So far as Kashmiris are concerned, they no longer have any concern in Kashmir. I was born in Jaora and Jaora is my home. If my mother

was born in Sirsa, Sirsa (Hissar District) is her home and she is a Punjabi. That was the great and special feature in the career of Kashmiris in India that they won love and appreciation of the people where they had settled and they have come to be regarded as natives of that province. In Allahabad there were several families. I came over here in 1905. I had never dreamt that I would come and practice here, but by the grace of God I started practice in Kanpur and then when I passed my Master of Laws examination, I wanted to carry on in Kanpur, but Dr. Sapru said it would be disgraceful for a Master of Laws to practice in a district court. So I came over here and I have now made Allahabad my home since 1914. Some of my younger children have been born here. They think of Allahabad as their home.

Contact with Dr. Sapru and Pandit Sunderlal

I had the great good fortune of coming into close contact with the Sapru family. Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, when I came here in 1905, used to be the Law Lecturer of the Law class. Then when I came over in 1914, I used to work in his chambers for several years, but apart from legal matters, I used to look upon him as my guide, philosopher and friend. He was an embodiment of professional honour, honesty, integrity and he was the noblest living being. He was a great politician. He was a liberal. He believed in those days in Dominion Status. Somehow or other I took a wider turn and Gandhiji made an appeal to me and we took to different sides. Dr. Sapru was a great personality and I think the legal profession has lost a wonderful member, a great moulder of the profession, by the death of Tej Bahadur Sapru. My connection with him was very close and intimate and he was a source of inspiration to me.

I came to know Pandit S derlal also. Unfortunately Pandit Sunderlal died in 1917. He was a quiet man. He was a legislator but he moulded the educational development in Uttar Pradesh. In a way he was the builder of the Banaras Hindu University. Malaviyaji collected three crores but I think Sunderlalji gave his cooperation to him in organising the University. And then there was the great Satish Chandra Banerjee. He was a great jurist but he unfortunately passed away in 1915 within one year of my starting practice in the Allahabad High Court.

Congress Ministry in U.P.

State Elections were held in 1936 and I was one of the members elected to the U.P. Legislature. The Congress Ministry was formed in 1937. There was some discussion about it. The offer was made in February, but then a delay took place - of four months - because of discussions between Gandhiji, Jawaharlal and the British Government and ultimately the U.P. Cabinet was formed in 1937. I was one of the six Ministers. Now-a-days we have become accustomed to large ministries. Our ministry consisted of only six members, Govind Ballabh Pant, myself, Sampurnanandji and Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. Most of even these six Ministers said they would like to have one or two departments under their control with the result that many departments were left to the management of two, namely the Chief Minister and myself. I was then called Minister of Justice and Development. At that time one topic which dominated all discussions in Congress was the zamindari system and there was a universal demand for abolition of zamindari. In my charge there were the departments dealing with administration of justice and development, including agriculture, dairy-farming, co-operation, industries, labour and village development. My heart lies in the villages of India. I live in a town but I am aware of the disabilities from which rural people suffer, the deficiencies under which they labour and the backwardness which is a feature of rural life. So when I started, I was most keen to establish Panchayat Raj, to promote the cooperative movement and village development. Legislation was undertaken for the establishment of village Panchayats. Village Panchayats were established almost in each village and they gave a great fillip to the Co-operative movement, and village development also occupied a great place in public imagination. I used to tour rural areas extensively. I remember very well once I went to a village (when I was the Governor of Orissa) and one of the villagers said, "We have been under the British administration from 1802. We have never had a single visit from any officer above the rank of a Tahsildar and you are now the Governor of Orissa and you have come to us in the village." "Well", I said to them, "This is the gift of independence." But my anxiety was to improve the village and the village

atmosphere. This I tried my best to do in the first two years of my ministry in United Provinces. We made great progress, industrial progress, labour also, trade also. Of course, the Governor was there and funds were limited. I remember very well - of course, a rupee was rupee in those days, but the U.P. revenue was below 15 crores and nearly 7 crores were spent on salaries and other things and for development activities and other activities, social welfare etc., we had only 7 crores left. Now the budget would be to the extent of over two hundred crores. Taxes have risen and the resources have risen and all that. Our funds were very limited. But my anxiety was to ask the people to help themselves. I wrote a pamphlet which was largely circulated and which made a wide appeal, which I called "Rural Development through self-help". I said you look after your village at your own expense. Then began the War and within three months all the ministries resigned.